



MEETING SUMMARY

March 30, 2012

A regular *public meeting* of the New Jersey State Interagency Coordinating Council was held on Friday, March 30, 2012, at Children's Specialized Hospital in New Brunswick, New Jersey. The meeting was called to order at 11:15 a.m. by Celine Fortin, who presided in the absence of Acting Chair Warren Moore.

ATTENDANCE – *Attached*

WELCOME/PRESIDER REPORT – Celine Fortin

1. Ms. Fortin *welcomed all attendees*, including those at off-premise sites in Hamilton and Mountainside. At her request, SICC members and 24 public members introduced themselves and identified their connection with early intervention.
2. In behalf of the Council, Ms. Fortin expressed deep appreciation to *Denise Murray, who resigned* from the SICC on February 15 (*attached*). Ms. Murray served with distinction as a provider for eight years. Aside from her active participation as various committee chairs, Ms. Murray served as vice chair for four years and as interim chair for three months. Ms. Murray responded with appreciation for her years serving children with special needs through the SICC.
3. Ms. Fortin called attention to the *newly formed committees*, their members and chairs – which is now complete (*attached*):
 - Warren Moore will serve as chair of the Service Delivery Committee
 - Serving as co-chairs of the Family Support Committee are Tia Dix, Michele Tyler and Patti Ciccone.

Mr. Moore requested that committees meet prior to the next SICC meeting on May 18th and report back to the Council during the public session. The Council unanimously agreed to hold Early Bird Sessions preceding the May 18th meeting -- upon motion by Ms. Christopoulos, seconded by Dr. Holahan and carried. Ms. Fortin reminded committees to designate someone to take notes and send them to Terrie Goeke for dissemination .

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the *November 18, 2011* meeting were approved as distributed – upon motion by Michele Christopoulos, seconded by Joseph Holahan and unanimously carried.

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES

Terry Harrison, Part C Coordinator, New Jersey Early Intervention System

1. Ms. Harrison called attention to the items she recently emailed SICC members (attached to file copy of minutes):

- *Policy Prohibiting Discrimination in the Workplace*
- NJ State Model Procedures for Internal Complaints Alleging Discrimination in the Workplace
- Acknowledgement of Receipt, which must be signed/returned to her

This policy applies to all State employees and everyone that conducts business within a State workplace, which includes members of boards, councils and commissions. She urged members to hand in their signed Acknowledgements today.

2. *Governor Christie released his 2013 proposed budget.* The 2012 early intervention state appropriation was \$92.953 million and the proposed 2013 recommendation by the Governor is \$88.4 million. The reduction was based on current participation trends.

The Governor is committed to the Early Intervention System and has requested no program changes, including provider rates and family cost participation. Assurance was given that “all children in need of developmental intervention will receive appropriate services.” The budget includes language that, if additional funds as may be necessary are appropriated for the same purpose, subject to the approval of the Director of the Division of Budgeting and Accounting.

Other revenue projections are: (a) Medicaid ... \$28-\$30 million; (b) Family Cost Share ... \$5.8-\$6.0 million, with no family cost participation increase to families. Discussion focused on the \$4.2 million difference, and could it be used to increase payment to service providers and/or reduce Family Cost Participation.

Council agreed – on motion by Joyce Salzberg, seconded by Steve Weiss and carried – to send a letter to the Governor, thanking him for the money allocated to the Early Intervention Program System and urging that \$4.2 million be returned to the budget to decrease Family Cost Participation; (b) to legislators, asking them to preserve funding as they move forward in their budget negotiations and expressing concern regarding (1) several years of no provider increases and (2) the impact of Family Cost Participation on families. (Abstaining were Chanell McDevitt and Barbara Tkach.)

- The letters will be drafted by Ms. Fortin, Ms. Salzberg, Mr. Weiss
- The drafts will be circulated for Council approval
- The letters will be signed by Acting Chair Moore
- There is a sense of urgency in getting the letters to the Governor and legislators .

3. *The OSEP Continuous Improvement Visit Report* from the October/November onsite visit has been received. There were no program findings. A separate letter will be sent addressing any fiscal issues. The Lead Agency will continue to work with the stakeholder workgroup to address the Social Emotional Results topic identified as a component of the visit. Ms. Harrison distributed a release in which the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), announced new efforts to move from compliance focused approach to one

driven by the results (attached to file copy). The Department will not be carrying out the on-site visits scheduled for the 2012-13 year to allow time to develop and implement a new more effective monitoring system.

4. Two public hearings on *Federal Part C Regulations and the New Jersey 2012 Federal Part C* were scheduled. Every policy continues to be reviewed and updated, with many changes anticipated to address the new Part C regulations. Webinars will be held in May/June for provider agencies and practitioners.

5. The Lead Agency is working with REICs on using a process designed by the Data Accountability Center (DAC) to *develop one county plan in each region* that identifies hypotheses that the provider agencies will implement to improve family outcomes.

6. At the request of the Agency, Mercer County Community College has submitted a proposal to move forward with providing *online training*. In addition, a new on-line process for mandated training for IFSP will be implemented in May. It is an efficient, user friendly process, which will be through the REIC website (NJEIS.org).

7. The State Office of Information Technology has approved the Central Management Office (CMO) Request for Proposal (RFP) *scope of work*. The next step is for Treasury to finalize and release the RFP, which is anticipated to be completed within the month. Ms. Harrison gave a comprehensive summary of this project's nine-year history.

8. Distributed/discussed were *Family Cost Participation Reports 3/28/12* (attached to file copy): (a) revenue by statement date, (b) suspensions by month delinquent letter generated, (c) by month child exited EI, (d) by month child exited EI with FPL. Records indicate that the system is stable; that there is no increase in families dropping out because of cost.

9. Alvina Seto, *Procedural Safeguards* Coordinator, distributed/commented on several aspects of the activity report since the Council's last meeting (attached to file copy). The 119 increase of total informal complaints since July 2012 is attributed to a more comprehensive collection and reporting process this year.

10. Nashon Hornsby, Administrative Director of the Division of Family Health Services, joined the Council meeting to report on the *New Jersey Autism Study (NJAS) – summary attached*. The Council deemed it important to follow the trends, and referred this aspect to the Service Delivery Committee.

UPDATE FROM REICS

In behalf of the REIC Directors, Cynthia Newman made a 15-minute comprehensive power point presentation of New Jersey's Early Intervention System and the *role of Regional Early Intervention Collaboratives* (attached to file copy of minutes). The REIC Directors were commended for the thoroughness of the presentation.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Ms. Harrison followed up on two issues raised at the preceding meeting (1/ 27/12):
 - *EIP agency designation; EIP letter of agreements*
 - *EIP early intervention provider assignment; provider agencies/practitioners*

Ms. Harrison distributed/explained in detail the policy and procedure for each of the above issues (attached to file copy). The policy and procedure on EIP Agency Designation is currently in draft format. Ms. Harrison said she would accept comments regarding this draft for the next week, after which it will be distributed in final form. The Council requested that these two issues be referred to the Service Delivery Committee.

2. Barbara Tkach distributed/discussed a *New Jersey Council for Young Children* newsletter, in which is listed the names/titles/affiliations of its members. Member Laura Morana, Superintendent of Red Bank Borough School Districts, has written a comprehensive report on “Early Learning Standards Birth to Three”. Dr. Morana has offered to attend an SICC meeting and do an overview of these standards. The Council suggested that Dr. Morana be invited to the next meeting or when the agenda timeframe can accommodate her.

NEW BUSINESS

1. At Ms. Fortin’s request, members offered the following suggestions for the **July 27 member retreat**:

- Getting to know one another – especially with so many new members
- Better idea of where SICC fits into Early Intervention System
- From the Lead Agency: Early Intervention System and how SICC relates to them
- Goal setting and priorities
- How committees meet and report back to full Council
- Internal rather than external
- No need for a facilitator
- Hours 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. – with earlier adjournment if agenda covered
- More discussion at the May 18th meeting

2. The REIC Directors distributed their schedule of **New Jersey Early Intervention Week 2012 activities** (attached to file copy). They encouraged Council members to attend some of the events.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. *David Holmes, interim Executive Director of ABCD/Early Intervention Providers Association (EIPA)* ... Offered to serve on an SICC committee ... stressed financial impact of providers not getting rate increase in 5-6 years; continued lack of rate increase could affect provider services ... suggested agencies be given an increase in gas reimbursement.

2. *Donna Castellano, CPNJ ...* Reiterated her concern, expressed at the 1/27/12 meeting, with local agreement for Agency catchment areas versus rotation of EIP assignment of services for children and their families; emphasized the need for the Lead Agency to revisit NJEIS-09 Policy and Procedure – which, she continued to allege, is proving burdensome and counter-productive for quality services and has a negative financial impact on the system.

ADJOURNMENT – 1:30 p.m.

Upon motion by Ms. Peto, seconded by Mr. Weiss and carried.

APPROVED

5.18.12